

# **MINUTES**

## **THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN CITY OF BRANSON, MISSOURI June 23, 2020**

### **INTRODUCTORY**

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Branson, Missouri, met in regular session in the Council Chambers of the City Hall on June 23, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Akers called the meeting to order with the "Pledge of Allegiance," the Preamble of the Missouri Constitution and Jamie Rouch gave the invocation.

### **ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Westfall called roll: Mayor Akers presiding, Jamie Whiteis, Bob Simmons, Bill Skains, Larry Milton and Jeff Seay. Absent: Kevin McConnell.

### **AWARDS / RECOGNITIONS**

#### **Proclamation**

Mayor Akers provided an introduction and asked City Clerk Westfall to read his Proclamation Supporting Unity and Inclusion.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Akers began the Public Comments section of the Board of Aldermen meeting and stated in order to give everyone a chance to speak tonight I would like to ask if you are speaking on an item that you keep your comments succinct, to the point, to the topic and as short as possible. You will be allowed to only speak once on an item and please do not repeat what has already been said by another speaker. Once open public discussion has ended on the item and the Board starts their discussion, no additional comments will be taken from the audience. Please remember to speak your name into the mic and your address and please seek to follow our five minute guideline. There will be a five minute clock on each of the screens. If the Aldermen wish they can ask to have someone come back up to speak to clarify.

Parker Olson, 221 Westminster Place, Hollister, Missouri, commented while he doesn't currently live inside City limits he's vested in this town, in his family's business and in his friends and family who live in town. He understands over these last few months people have lost a lot and struggled emotionally and mentally. He mentioned there's many issues in the country, in society and in this town and while the virus continues, he feels everyone must look towards the future. Mr. Olson explained he's here to discuss the financial future of Branson and one of the things he'd like to bring to light is the fact that new generations such as millennials and Generation Z travel a lot. It's part of the growing culture as they are willing to spend a lot more on their vacations and will be an integral part of Branson's financial future. He feels steps should be taken to ensure Branson doesn't lose its tourism base and will continue to grow and protect the financial future of the citizens of Branson. Mr. Olson expressed the aim of this is to be inclusive of all ages, not exclude any age groups, include more options for younger age groups and look forward to the development of Branson as a community. Another big thing is the financial situation, since a lot of people in Branson struggle throughout the winter in the off season due to the lack of tourism

that's experienced during the summer months. He believes getting more large companies, plants and manual labor jobs for the community is one solution that would add to the people coming to Branson; whether to see family, shop or enjoy all the amenities Branson has to offer. He explained this would allow for long-time employment in the area, improve financial spending during the off season and potentially allow other businesses and entertainment in town to stay open longer. Hopefully, it would eventually eliminate the term "off season" in town. Branson's been growing a lot with its sports culture and he feels this is definitely something that will play an integral part in the future. He mentioned recently hearing discussions about the idea of getting a stadium in town, possibly in the area where the new Branson Police Department will be. If this is done, he recommended it be for winter sports which would draw large amounts of tourism and revenue during the off season months. Mr. Olson expressed the need of looking at the potential of technology which is ever evolving and integrating into society. Whether it's with e-sports being one of the main ways the new generation of people get involved in hobbies or technology jobs. He mentioned a lot of people he knows are going to local colleges to pursue careers for this, but these jobs aren't currently available in Branson. People would have to move away from their families to pursue careers in these fields. He reported the top three reasons millennials travel are to relax, spend quality time with family or see natural sites. He feels if Branson focuses on continuing to develop these goals, it will have a strong financial future. He provided a handout to the Board. (See attached handout)

Kimberly Vaughn, 3080 Bluebird Road, Merriam Woods, Missouri, introduced herself as a resident of Branson and the Taney County area for 22 years. She mentioned she's here to discuss visible Confederate memorabilia in Branson's Entertainment District and how locals and tourists alike have come to view the community. She reported on April 20, 2020, Marine Corps Commandant General David Berger directed all Confederate-related items be removed from Marine Corps bases worldwide and on May 19, 2016, House Representatives voted to ban Confederate flags flying from poles at Veterans Administration Cemeteries. The author of this amendment, Jared Huffman, vehemently stated the Confederate flag represents racism, slavery and division. She quoted a southern historian named Gordon Ray, who said it is no accident that the Confederate symbols have the mainstay in white supremacist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and the skinheads. They do not appropriate the Confederate flag simply because it was pretty; they picked the flag because it was a nation dedicated to their ideas that the negro is not equal to the white man. Ms. Vaughn explained people are told the Confederate flag represents heritage and not hate. She inquired why a heritage with a self-avowed reason for existence of the exploitation and debasement of a sizeable segment of its own population should be celebrated. She reported since Sunday's protest at Dixie Outfitters where active members of the KKK and the League of the South counter protested, there is now a boycott Branson hashtag trend going viral and a video with nearly ten million views. She feels the world is watching Branson and is aware of where the community stands at the moment on symbolic racism and hatred. She asked if this is what Branson wants or if a change could be made moving forward as a community to make Branson truly welcoming for all the people, locals and tourists alike. She believes this is the chance to do what's right.

Kelsey Allen, 163 Country Ridge Way, Branson, Missouri, expressed concerns as a resident, former small business owner, a proud member and volunteer of this community. She understands the City has to abide by certain legal standards, but doesn't understand the contradiction with what the City projects within this town. She referred to Ordinance No. 2019-0131 which states, generally ensure that signage is appropriate to a particular use and location so that the cumulative effect is an attractive City environment, thereby reinforcing community values. She commented, according to Planning and Development Director Joel Hornickel, when asked about the zoning for medical cannabis dispensaries, he said areas that the Board of Aldermen did not feel were appropriate for this type of use or this type of business was in this Entertainment District. She asked the Board to consider why Dixie Outfitters is allowed to be on West 76 Country Boulevard after all of the information it's been given. She reminded everyone the counter protest in support of Dixie Outfitters brought in members of the KKK and the League of the South. Ms. Allen commented the Confederate flag insights violence and many historians and political scientists say the flag itself is a symbol for racism, slavery and division. She inquired how that is a welcoming, family-friendly community for tourists visiting this town. She commented 76 Country Boulevard is the main attraction and asked what message this sends as a community allowing this to happen in the Entertainment District. Ms. Allen feels this business is despicable, especially due to its ownership and what they represent, and cleaning up 76 Country Boulevard by removing all visible



Confederate memorabilia is imperative. She feels zoning regulations need to be re-evaluated and change needs to happen in this town.

Thomas Gal, 39 Berview Circle, St. Louis, Missouri, introduced himself as a permanent resident of St. Louis and a teacher who likes to visit Branson during the summer to spend time with family. He explained he's here as a guest and wants to thank everyone from Branson for their hospitality. He knows times are pretty interesting right now as people are going through a lot and the reason he's here to speak is because he would like to get some clarification on the proclamation the Board made prior to the meeting. He referred to the proclamation which says anyone that loves the Ozarks is welcome and the City of Branson does not condone hate speech. Mr. Gal said with the remainder of his time he'd like to allow any member of the Board to voice their stance on the KKK. He clarified they can make it as simple as they either condone or don't condone it and he asked them to vocalize their stance if they felt the need or responsibility to do so. He inquired if any members of the Board would like to add anything and feels if they don't, it speaks volumes. Discussion.

Richard White, 99 Royal Vista Drive, Branson, Missouri, introduced himself as a high school teacher and lifelong resident of the area. He explained he'd like to address the proposed closing of the recycle center as an educator and lifelong resident. He teaches chemistry and biology at Hollister High School and teaches his students about environmental issues that will affect the future. Mr. White said he teaches them about sea level rise and how coastal cities are dealing with flooding and sea water backing up in the streets. He added, even though people live in the middle of the country what they do affects the climate worldwide and sea levels. He also teaches them about how lowering emissions of greenhouse gases and conserving electricity helps the entire planet. Mr. White explained he teaches his students how much people's lives revolve around plastic products. Most of which are disposable, everything from car parts, water bottles to tubing used in hospitals are plastic. The problem with this plastic is it never decomposes, every piece of plastic ever produced is somewhere on the planet. Most of it ends up in the oceans where it breaks down into tiny particles and is ingested by sea animals and birds. Plastic has now entered the food chain and virtually all animals, including humans, have plastic inside them. He reported a few years ago Hollister High School students started plastic recycling and they now have two trash barrels in many of the hallways and in the cafeteria. Mr. White explained they know the trash that goes in the gray barrel goes to the landfill and the trash that goes in the blue barrel goes to the Branson recycling center. He's been encouraged by the young people as they're very receptive to recycling and seem to understand they're inheriting a planet with man-made environmental change. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over the next 10 years there's going to be growth in the solar and wind power field and his job is to help prepare young people for these careers and to be environmentally-conscious citizens. He feels it's the job of adults to model the behavior they want young people to exhibit and if they don't prioritize recycling, the young people won't either. Mr. White explained next he'd like to address this issue as a lifelong resident of the area for most of his life. He remembered in the 1970s and 1980s when Branson's tourist season lasted from Memorial Day to Labor Day and then got pretty quiet. He recalled the boom in the 1990s when Branson received national attention and grew at an exponential rate. Recently, he's watched the City deal with changing visitor demographics and try to appeal to younger tourists. One constant he's noticed over the 50 years he's lived here is the quality of the lakes. He noted since the completion of the dams, people have traveled to the area to take advantage of the lakes because they don't have this quality of water back home. They're pristine because the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources have strict environmental policies and make conservation a priority. Branson has benefited for decades from the visitors of the lake who purchase supplies, sleep, eat, shop and visit attractions in Branson. He feels there would be far fewer visitors here if it weren't for this and he believes Branson owes a debt of gratitude to these lakes. Mr. White said he believes closing the recycling center is a bad idea as it implies Branson City leaders do not prioritize conservation. He feels it's backwards thinking and will be unpopular to tourists and the community, especially the younger, eco-conscious people. In his mind any money generated by the recycling center is gravy and while he understands it might be in the red, it needs to be looked at as a marketing tool. Rather than go backwards by closing it, celebrate and advertise it and let visitors know Branson welcomes them to its beautiful lakes and mountains. He said to ask them to please recycle so our children and grandchildren can enjoy the same environment we've been privileged to experience.

Travis Morgan, 2114 Bird Road, Branson, Missouri, introduced himself as a Branson resident for 20 years and is here today in light of what's going on in the world. He first planned to share an experience with the Police Department, but instead wants to ask some questions to clarify and bring to



light anything that might be going on. He asked the Board how new hires with the Police Department are vetted and trained and inquired if it supports a National Database of officers that have been disciplined for excessive use of force. Mr. Morgan asked the Board how the Police Department currently handles transparency of new hires and officer behavior. Additionally, he asked how it plans to improve upon that transparency and how officers are currently trained in mental health diversity, social justice issues, the LGBTQ community and people of all socioeconomic classes. He questioned the current nature of the community relationship with the police and asked if there is an officer or department dedicated to community liaison with youth, black and minority communities. He expressed these are his questions and concerns and he doesn't feel there's very good transparency within the Police Department. He'd like to know how this can be improved upon. Discussion.

Katarina Makuch, 121 Lenhart Lane, Branson, Missouri, mentioned she's 19 and grew up in the Branson community which has shaped her into who she is today. She's here to voice her opinion on the changes that should be enacted in this community. Around the nation, cities, towns and neighborhoods are looking for methods to change and she believes there's an obvious step that can be taken in Branson to eliminate the spread of hate. She explained the rest of the nation does not accept the Confederate flag as anything but a hate symbol. She expressed her concerns that Branson has stayed silent about that association for too long and she feels now is the time for people to act and voice their opinions on this. She believes through these weeks of protesting, a lot of Branson's racist minority has been exposed and to encourage diversity and change it starts with appreciation. She further explained, appreciating black lives in Branson by representing them in its shows, dances, schools and local workplaces. She expressed it is the responsibility of business owners and operators of Branson to set a standard not to remain silent. Ms. Makuch added, we pride ourselves on patriotism and there are 31 words in the Pledge of Allegiance, but only the last four of them matter: liberty and justice for all.

Sameerah Munshi, 165 Benjamin Place, Branson, Missouri, mentioned growing up in Branson her whole life and said she wants to speak about the issues regarding the protests outside Dixie Outfitters. As a person of color growing up in this City, she's experienced issues of racism and discrimination to the point where she felt unsafe at times. She explained these are things that aren't just about people not saying things and she feels it's just as important staying silent as it is saying something. There are times where people should have spoken up and there are times people have spoken hateful things. Today she wants to talk about the protests, what she thinks they're representing and being taken as. She thinks people are seeing the protests and they're using them as a way to channel their frustration about things that are beyond what the protests actually mean. Ms. Munshi commented it's no secret police brutality has been a big catalyst for the Black Lives Matter movement and there's been a lot of backlash towards police and institutions as a result. She clarified this isn't what the protestors are here for, what they're standing for and they're not here to attack anyone. They're here to help Branson recognize what it's doing isn't enough and that it's really cut off from the outrage of the black community. She believes this doesn't mean people can ignore it because not acting for change is unacceptable. She knows it's uncomfortable to think about how everyone has been a part of racism and oppression, but feels it's something that people need to start talking about. Ms. Munshi stated the fact that the statement has been made is important, but it is not far enough in taking action against issues of injustice. There are a lot of actual items such as some that other commenters have mentioned here today and she asked people to not to take what the protestors say out of context or use it as an excuse to say this is a larger agenda they want to further. She explained they really do care about the City of Branson and people are being hurt as a result of not standing up and making changes. She urged everyone to take these comments seriously.

Joshua Pope, 1812 Neihardt Drive, Branson, Missouri, mentioned speaking to the Board because he's been quiet over the years for many things. He's felt as the country faces the problems it has, it's not enough to be quiet and watch anymore. As somebody who studies history and sees the events unfolding resemble many events of the past, he felt it was important to address Dixie Outfitters and the symbolism it flies in the street openly in Branson. He explained the Confederate flag is not a symbol of southern pride, but a symbol historically of southern hate, rebellion and a nation-state regime of terror built on the premise of enslaving another human based off the color of their skin. He personally sees the idea of having the Confederate flag flown on the streets as almost as prominent and equivalent to having a Nazi flag flying in the streets. Mr. Pope voiced his concerns for it having just as much meaning and power in hate to people in this country. Millions of lives throughout history have been crushed or enslaved because of what it stands for. While he understands closing down Dixie Outfitters would be



constitutionally impossible and an uphill battle, he believes it's paramount to remove the hate symbol from flying so openly to people and those visiting town. He added, it's not a welcome image to people who visit town and it doesn't set a good precedence for the people of the City. People who come here see it as a representation of the people of Branson as a whole, because people are allowing it to exist here.

Doug Clark, 121 A Saint Andrews Street, Branson, Missouri, stated he's examined the COVID-19 virus and the tactics that have brought things to the point of having all of this economic damage and people unemployed. He reported the tests being used to identify this disease is a test that was invented for a diagnostic purpose. This comes directly from the inventor, Kary Mullis, who won a Nobel Prize in 1993 for that test which he explicitly said wasn't to be used to identify a disease. Mr. Clark reported Mr. Mullis did have some conversations with Dr. Anthony Fauci, the hierarchy of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) regarding his complaints about using this test to identify a virus. He explained what they do to an individual like him after complaining is they try to undermine their integrity and ruin their careers. There were four or five individuals other than him, but he told them he invented the test, it wasn't to be used as a diagnostic test and that he had the credibility of the Nobel Prize. Mr. Clark reported there's other people who ended up losing their careers because of Dr. Fauci and the hierarchy of the medical community, one of them was Peter Duesberg. Mr. Clark recalled in the 1980s HIV was the big disease and they didn't know what they were going to do about it. It affected a lot of different varieties of people, different diversities and it was a stigmatism. He explained, several prominent researchers were getting grants from the WHO, CDC, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Infectious Disease Director and when they expressed concerns contradictory to the status quo, their research grants were yanked and their careers were ruined. Mr. Clark added, so this is the pattern these people have that we've started listening to; to direct our Healthcare System, to the direction of undermining legitimate scientific research contradictory to the protocols. He mentioned another instance involving a boxer by the name of Tommy Morrison who was a heavyweight boxer in the 1980s. He won heavyweight champion and at the time people were trying to figure out what to do with the blood contamination in boxing. It was decided to test boxers to see if they had HIV and they used a PCR test to test HIV. Although it was not intended to be a test to prove that, they banned him from boxing at the top of his career in 1996. He was completely taken away from his job, he couldn't earn any money as a boxer he declined into drugs. Mr. Clark mentioned Tommy Morrison died about three or four years ago and his wife is still trying to prove that he did not have HIV. He explained she didn't have it and he didn't have it, but there was a stigmatism that they did. He added, they finally let him go back to boxing about 10 years later, he boxed a little and later died in the hospital from something unrelated to AIDS. He urged people to ask themselves if anybody is really examining the testing for this disease since it does not test for an actual virus, but tests for particles of DNA of a protein. He feels this should make people sit up and ask some questions. He asked how many people in business have had their businesses shut down for three months over a fictitious test. Mr. Clark explained the other two tests being used are not any better. One gives 80% false negatives and the PCR test gives about 20% to 30% false negatives. He thinks everybody ought to be completely aggravated about this and pointed out that even with the recent big events going on such as Black Lives Matter protests and conventions, people aren't seeing the outcome that was predicted by the NIH and health care community. Mr. Clark urged everyone to do their own research and not believe anyone they hear. He recommended the young people in the audience research the background of oppression back to when it started and not believe anything anyone tells them.

Jean Chanda, 428 Kayes Lane, Hollister, Missouri, introduced herself as a resident of Hollister, registered voter, long-time activist, proud Democrat and former Chair of the Taney County Democratic Central Committee. She commented she's proud to be a Democrat and the views she expresses here are her own and do not reflect anyone else's or any other organization, although she suspects many others agree with her. She thanked the Black Lives Matter protesters, those who have shared their stories and the media that is finally laser focused on them right now. Ms. Chanda mentioned Branson is in the news again for a store that claims to sell white southern heritage memorabilia, but seems to be acquiring a much darker reputation. She feels most people know that Nathan Robb and his wife own Dixie Outfitters, but some don't know that he's the son of Tom Robb who's the head of the KKK near Harrison, Arkansas. She feels if this doesn't make one question Branson's image of family-friendly entertainment, her next comments will shock them. Ms. Chanda reported at the latest Black Lives Matter rally in Branson at Dixie Outfitters, a female counter-protester wrapped in the Confederate battle flag was filmed saying she would raise her grandkids to hate. She also stated the phrase KKK belief in



response to a protester who said nobody should believe in hate and this video now has 10 million views. She explained she wasn't there, but others were saying there were counter-protesters and an older man who used the n-word in response to one of the Black Lives Matter protesters. Ms. Chanda feels this type of behavior should shock everyone, but bets it doesn't due to working with some racist business owners in this town who treat people of color with disrespect. She bets this isn't the only time people have recently heard of this type of disrespect shown to minorities which has to stop. She doesn't believe anyone can argue this behavior is anywhere close to family-friendly and she asked the Board to take a position in support of Black Lives Matter and denounce the racist behavior shown to Black Lives Matter protesters. Ms. Chanda asked them to include a denouncement of Dixie Outfitters selling the racist Confederate battle flag as it was used as a major symbol of the KKK during the civil rights movement. It has no factual basis in representing the South as a whole in the time of the Civil War and she asked the Board to include in its denouncement that the counter-protesters' behavior does not reflect the family-friendly image Branson is known for. As a good faith commitment, she asked them to see Dixie Outfitters as a controversial business that should not have a central location in Branson and request it move to a location out of the way of traffic. If the Board doesn't do as some are asking, she fears for Branson's reputation and tourism and explained this past weekend's protest attracted so much attention, there's now talk of shutting down 76 Country Boulevard this Saturday afternoon in response to the counter-protesters' comments. She expressed many people are justifiably angry at the behavior of some of the counter-protesters and Dixie Outfitters' tacit acceptance of that behavior which doesn't reflect Branson or family values in any way, shape or form. If the Board doesn't denounce this behavior as an entire governing body, not just the Mayor, or ignore what's happened, Branson's tourism will be put in Jeopardy as it will be seen as a safe haven for racists. She commented, not everyone who supports this Confederate battle flag are racists, but some are not educated to its historical uses as too many use it as a racist symbol to hide behind, which it actually is according to history. She asked the Board to consider what's been said today and the reputation of Branson.

Nate Horsman, 2550 State Highway 248, Branson, Missouri, mentioned moving to Branson from Oklahoma 21 years ago, he raised his son here and his family's roots go back generations. Many people may have heard of his family, specifically about Reuben Branson, who founded this town in 1912. Mr. Horsman voiced his concerns about the recent uptick in Coronavirus cases nationwide, in the State of Missouri and in Branson. He commented the beginning of this was unfortunate and an unprecedented time that he wasn't paying much attention to until the NBA and all sports were cancelled, then he knew people were headed for something pretty serious. He recalled in late March the City of Branson began to take the situation more seriously and instituted its own guidelines which he commended the Board for and it did the right thing and slowed the spread. Mr. Horsman mentioned it was in the offseason and Branson lost all of its spring break business. Business owners made sacrifices he cannot even imagine, but Branson kept the Coronavirus at bay, saved a lot of its citizens and tourists from getting sick and probably even saved lives. Mr. Horsman commented life went on with empty hotels, attractions and streets and while it sucks for people to suffer, the town made it through. He added, then Branson opened its gates, people came and here we are now. It is late June, a month after Memorial Day Weekend, Taney County hovered around 13 cases for a while and then boom, it doubled its numbers in a week. He reported a 120% increase in Taney County in just a little over a week and the cases are not Community spread, which means tourists are bringing it in. It's in the community and there's no sign of it slowing down. Mr. Horsman reported the State of Missouri is a hotspot with Joplin, Missouri, being the nation's top spot for COVID-19 growth over the past week. He believes this is not the second wave, but is still the first wave. He explained Branson was open, the tourists are here and Branson had a plan in place to keep everyone safe. He believes most restaurants and businesses did and are still doing a great job of doing their best to adhere to all safety recommendations and guidelines in the Show Me Strong Recovery Plan. Time passed and when people went into phase II they got too comfortable; locals cared, but the vast majority of tourists did not. He knows this because people all over the place have told him so. He feels tourists simply don't care as they want to come here on vacation, have fun, enjoy everything Branson has to offer and they don't want to hear about Coronavirus. Some are very caring and accepting, but from what he's hearing most are not and it's costing more citizens getting stricken with this virus. He mentioned there have been 33 cases, two people have died and he feels Branson needs to do something as it's made national news twice this past week; one for being a hotspot for Coronavirus and the other for recent Black Lives Matter versus local racism. Neither one he's proud of as a citizen and no one else here is either. Mr. Horsman mentioned Branson had over 10 million Twitter hits for the events that happened last weekend and he feels Branson has a chance to turn things around. He commented the election is over, this is the new Board and it's time for it to lead everyone out of this



unfortunate time as there are people in this community begging it to do so. He said he's talked to a lot of people who have battled this virus and their warnings have been that it was terrible and they felt like they were going to die. They would not wish what they went through on anyone as it was the sickest they've ever been in their life. Mr. Horsman requested the Board mandate masks for citizens and tourists since cities all over America have done it, cities as close as Fayetteville, Arkansas. He feels if Silver Dollar City did it why couldn't Branson. He knows masks are uncomfortable and inconvenient, but they've been proven to slow the spread and keep people safe, which is all he's asking the Board to do. He urged the Board to step up and do it and asked how many people have to suffer before this highly contagious virus becomes a concern. He asked how many hospitalizations have to occur and how many citizens have to get sick and die before taking this more seriously. He asked what the magic number is so we can turn this around with one simple act and he explained masks are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Taney County Health Department. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and said he hopes it considers the seriousness of this issue. He quoted a comedian who said "So I am just watching my mom sleep and cough in her hospital bed over face time, trying to gulp down these last few moments of having a mom. This is all happening so fast."

Nancy Jucius, Branson, Missouri, addressed the Board about the recycle center and recognized there are budget issues due to the loss of income. She commented recycling is a big deal and everything that can be kept out of the landfills is good. She inquired how big the \$240,000 expense was in comparison to the total income of the City of Branson. She doesn't know what the City's total budget is, but the Board does and she asked them to think about the recycle center's importance. She acknowledged the importance of other services the City offers and asked the Board to look at all of it. She inquired if alternatives had been considered such as cutting hours, reducing staff, using community service hours or renegotiations with buyers of the recycle materials. She asked the Board to seriously consider other options. She said as an aside, the reason most people are here today is disgusting and mentioned she has a friend who will not come to her home because he's black.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Akers stated it's my responsibility as Mayor under state law to take care of the ordinances of our City and the state laws regarding our City are complied with. Under one of our ordinances, Branson Municipal Code 2-64, I am tasked with the responsibility of being the Presiding Officer of the Board and am required to preserve strict order and decorum at all meetings of the Board. Decorum is often defined in the dictionary by propriety or good taste in conduct or appearance and one of the many definitions of order is the state of peace, freedom from confused or unruly behavior and respect for law and proper authority. Unfortunately we've recently had a number of abstentions on votes without proper basis. The citizens of Branson elected us to make decisions on policy matters and we make those decisions by voting. We are obligated to vote unless a conflict of interest prevents us from doing so. The common law of the State of Missouri supports this. Although I cannot force any member of the Board to cast a vote, and no member can be required to cast a vote, I do have the authority to control the order and decorum of these meetings. As a result, I'm announcing under my authority to preserve order and decorum of these meetings that any abstention by any member of the Board during the meeting can be recast as a no vote.

Mayor Akers asked if there were any citizens who had any items they wished to have removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked if any member of the Board had any items they wished to have removed from the Consent Agenda. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked City Clerk Lisa Westfall to read the items on the Consent Agenda. City Clerk Lisa Westfall read the following Consent Agenda items by title.

Approval of Board of Aldermen Minutes:

- a) June 9, 2020 Regular Meeting I
- b) June 9, 2020 Regular Meeting II

Acknowledge Receipt of Minutes:

- a) Advisory Park Board meeting of May 19, 2020

**BILL NO. 5823**

**Ord. No. 2020-0067**

**Approving a petition to add certain real property to the 76 Entertainment Community Improvement District.**

Final Reading of Bill No. 5823, an ordinance approving a petition to add certain real property to the 76 Entertainment Community Improvement District was read by title by City Clerk Westfall. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: None. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Ordinance No. 2020-0067 was duly enacted.

**BILL NO. 5824**

**Ord. No. 2020-0068**

**Approving the annexation of the property located at 135 Lake Front Drive, Branson, Missouri.**

Final Reading of Bill No. 5824, an ordinance approving the annexation of the property located at 135 Lake Front Drive, Branson, Missouri, was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: None. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Ordinance No. 2020-0068 was duly enacted.

Mayor Akers opened the floor for a motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda. Alderman Skains moved to approve all items on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Alderman Whiteis. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: None. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

**BILL NO. 5818**

**DEFEATED**

**Approving the Sale of Real Estate to Rodriguez Real Estate Investment LLC.**

Final Reading of Bill No. 5818, an ordinance approving the Sale of Real Estate to Rodriguez Real Estate Investment LLC and authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall. She stated this bill was postponed on its Final Reading during the May 26, 2020 Regular Meeting. It is in need of a motion, second and a vote. A staff report was presented by City Attorney Chris Lebeck. Mayor Akers asked for a motion approving Bill No. 5818. Alderman Skains so moved, seconded by Alderman Simmons. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. No discussion. Voting aye: None. Nays: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Absent: McConnell. Motion failed.

**Alderman Simmons left the meeting at 7:01 p.m.**

**RESOLUTION NO.**

**2020-R009**

**Authorizing staff to negotiate terms of an Infrastructure Cost Share and Fee Reduction Agreement between the City of Branson and Branson Affordable Housing Partners, LLC.**



A Resolution authorizing staff to negotiate terms of an Infrastructure Cost Share and Fee Reduction Agreement between the City of Branson and Branson Affordable Housing Partners, LLC was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was provided by Utilities Director Mike Ray.

**Alderman Simmons returned to the meeting at 7:04 p.m.**

Mayor Akers asked for a motion adopting the resolution. Alderman Skains moved to adopt, seconded by Alderman Whiteis. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter.

Debbie Hart, introduced herself as part of the Branson Affordable Housing Development Team and mentioned addressing the Board a little over a year ago about the application for the first phase of this project. She explained it's a town home single-family development which will meet a tremendous need for workforce housing in the City of Branson. Originally there were talks about being closer to Country Bluff Subdivision, but later decided to relocate to the other side of the property to help with the ease of the development and appease some concerns of adjoining land owners. Ms. Hart commented, when making the application and receiving funding from the Missouri Housing Development Commission, that was one piece of the larger development. She explained the goal was to get to a development that was going to be cost effective not only for the 4.5 acres for the Fall Creek Townhomes Project, but to also provide available land for additional workforce housing that may not be part of the tax credit process. She mentioned they were thinking and hopeful they would be allocated in addition to some tax credits and there would be some additional mitigation Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars available to assist with off-sight infrastructure improvements for this development. She reported that hasn't happened and the reason for the request today is to aid not only in the 4.5 acre development, but also in the infrastructure costs for the surrounding property. It's no secret the development and infrastructure issues in Branson are expensive just because it's a difficult topography and there's not easy access. She explained on this particular 4.5 acre site there's a significant amount of infrastructure that has to happen just to get utilities to the site and is a large expense which makes construction costs much higher. She stated this project partners with a non-profit and the townhomes project will serve individuals and families living and working in Branson. The goal is to get the most high-quality development and keep construction costs as low as possible because that helps with the integrity of the project. She hopes the City is willing to work with them and understand it's a positive thing for the City in connection with developing additional workforce housing. She knows there's a significant need and Fall Creek Townhomes will start to make a difference in the vast amount of housing that's needed. Ms. Hart explained the other thing that will happen is the development of the remaining property and this infrastructure aid will allow more of that development to happen so they can serve folks that need to live and work in the community.

Mark Ruda, introduced himself as a partner in this project and mentioned the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) gave a dollar amount that needed to be hit for this project. He explained development in Branson is generally more expensive and this process started with a very tight budget. He added, they had hoped to be the recipient of some additional CDBG money that would help with infrastructure, but feels at this point it doesn't look likely. Moving the project from the side closest to Country Bluff, to where the utilities are now to the opposite side of this project, increases the costs. With the economic environment today, he asked the Board if it would consider exploring the possibility of providing a little bit of help.

Parker Olson, 221 Westminster Place, Hollister, Missouri, asked if this development would be required to participate in a program that for every tree removed from a semi or fully forested area, two trees be planted. He inquired if the developer had done an environmental impact report or assessment on the area and if so, if it would have any significant potential impact.

Debbie Hart addressed Parker Olson's question and explained they did an environmental assessment and there was no impact or issues.

Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Mayor Akers called for a vote on the resolution. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains and Seay. Nays: Milton. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Resolution No. 2020-R009 was adopted.



**RESOLUTION NO.  
2020-R010**

**Approving a Special Event Permit Application for the Fire Cracker 5000.**

A Resolution approving a Special Event Permit Application for the Fire Cracker 5000 was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was provided by Fire Chief Ted Martin.

**Alderman Skains left the meeting at 7:35 p.m. and returned at 7:37 p.m.**

Mayor Akers asked for a motion adopting the resolution. Alderman Milton moved to adopt, seconded by Alderman Whiteis. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Mayor Akers called for a vote on the resolution. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Resolution No. 2020-R010 was adopted.

**RESOLUTION NO.  
2020-R011**

**Approving the disposition of surplus property.**

A Resolution approving the disposition of surplus property was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was provided by Finance Director Jamie Rouch. Mayor Akers asked for a motion adopting the resolution. Alderman Skains moved to adopt, seconded by Alderman Whiteis. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Mayor Akers called for a vote on the resolution. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Resolution No. 2020-R011 was adopted.

**RESOLUTION NO.  
2020-R012**

**Authorizing staff to review and renegotiate the terms of the Ground Lease and provide an option for relief to base rent payments for the West 76 Airport Lease properties.**

A Resolution authorizing staff to review and renegotiate the terms of the Ground Lease and provide an option for relief to base rent payments for the West 76 Airport Lease properties was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was provided by Finance Director Jamie Rouch. Mayor Akers asked for a motion adopting the resolution. Alderman Skains moved to adopt, seconded by Alderman Whiteis. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter.

Craig Wescott, 3388 Green Mountain Drive, Branson, Missouri, said he's with the Track Family Fun Parks which is one of the lessees of the City. He commented he doesn't know if he's really representing the other lessees as there are others here that might speak such as the Hughes Brothers Theater, Lodge of the Ozarks, Mickey Gilley Shanghai Theater and Herschend Family Entertainment. Mr. Wescott stated times obviously are very tough and interesting, all of those are vast understatements. He explained the only reason they're here tonight is because of COVID-19 and the circumstances none of them have ever been in. He explained there are things that affect the business environment year-in and year-out that they budget for, but no one ever budgets for zero for the time when business is usually thriving in Branson. Mr. Wescott commented any financial relationships at his business are called partners, they are the bankers, vendors and insurance carriers. He referenced the Community Plan 2030 and feels from the City's perspective this would be partnerships, regional partnerships, that sort of thing. What he knows about the businesses on the old airport property is they've had varying leases starting around 1980 and they continue to make Branson a better place. These properties pour investment in, make their products new and they do all the things he thinks the City would want them to be doing. He said the other thing he knows about them is over these last few months, like everyone in town, they're all making major sacrifices in their businesses. They're making pay cuts, spending as little money as they can and freezing payments. If his business is not putting gas in go karts or doing something pertaining to safety, it's cutting budgets as much as it can. He's not coming here just looking



for a handout, because in his view, the City is his partner and landlord. He explained his request is if the City's going to continue to be in the business of being a landlord, he'd just ask the City consider some form of relief like other financial partners are doing. He reported at the time, he called and believes other may have contacted the City as well. He mentioned talking to banks about going to interest only and in some cases principal forgiveness for the moment. He also talked with insurance carriers to figure out ways to reduce premiums and he also spoke to vendors about flexibility when they're not providing a service since his business couldn't be physically open. He mentioned also working with his tenants such as brochure distribution companies and he understands both sides need the money, but it's really just trying to make it through together. Per City ordinance, his business couldn't open its doors and most businesses were closed more like 60 days if not more. He calculated 45 days out of 365 days is 12% of the year and while he thinks the revenue would be higher than 12%, his proposal was as conservative as possible. He estimated for his business it ends up being about \$9,600 and he doesn't know what it is for everybody off the top of his head, but feels it's really just something to feel like everyone's in this together. The City is the landlord, the businesses are the tenants and are doing everything they can. Mr. Wescott commented he doesn't know where the rest of this year is headed, but knows businesses lost a chunk of revenue already this year. He added, obviously if they're making money, the City's making money and that goes forward which is why he really looked at the base rent. He doesn't know what series the base rent is based on, but the fact is his business couldn't open its doors for 45 days and he's just asking for a little help with that. He added, if that can't be done, at least some flexibility on payment schedule. He doesn't know everybody's terms, but knows he has \$20,000 due next month and he requested flexibility on timing for his and other fellow businesses. He reported some have had conversations with the Finance Department and are just looking for a little bit of relief if possible. He understands its money, but also knows this group is going to keep doing everything they can. When their doors open and guidelines loosen, they'll be doing everything they can and will continue to make Branson a great place. Discussion.

**The meeting recessed at 7:54 p.m. and reconvened at 8:00 p.m.**

Lena Hughes, 3425 West 76 Country Boulevard, Branson, Missouri, said she's with the Hughes Brothers Theater and appreciates talking to the Board. She agreed with Mr. Wescott's comments and said she wants to add a couple of other points. She stated the businesses here representing the leased properties from the City have all been in business for a very long time in Branson. She believes this speaks volumes because there are a lot of businesses that come and go and these businesses are valuable partners of the City. Ms. Hughes commented one thing that's never happened to any of them is that they've never received any kind of help with what's required from them to pay the City. She gave an example of Ballparks of America that because it's new is not having to pay any kind of ground lease for the first five years which is quite a deal. She pointed out other places that have been developed in Branson have had an abatement of costs and the City's lessees are asking for very little. She stated the thing she'd also like to address is City Staff has determined the City can't afford to forgive a couple of months or six weeks' worth of base ground lease payments. She understands the City must be hurting too because there hasn't been enough people coming to town, so it's not going to get enough taxes collected. She feels the Board is probably wondering how it helps the City to help its lessees with this request. She explained if she can save a little bit of money she could put it into advertising to bring more people to Branson or she could hire somebody back that had to be laid off that's integral to her sales. Every little bit helps and it's a good move for the City to do something like that for these businesses that have never really received anything like that to help them. She added, this is a very important time to be helped and even though businesses were able to be opened back up, it was 45 days that the City closed them down. Businesses can close down overnight, but they can't open up very fast because it's a lot of work to bring employees back. Ms. Hughes explained a lot of businesses have waited longer because of the expense and difficulty of bringing people back and they want to make sure they can stay open once they re-open. She added, even staying open right now is hard because people aren't coming to Branson like they used to and people are still trying to social distance and do the things they can to keep people safe. She's hopeful the fall and Christmas seasons will really pick up and she explained the big difference between the City assisting these businesses versus others is because they're on a ground lease with the City and the City is their landlord. Discussion.

Marshall Howden, 106 Rose Oneill Drive, Branson, Missouri, introduced himself as the President of Song of Hope Assembly. Going through COVID-19, he feels everyone has heard stories about business owners around the country facing difficult challenges and have perhaps rolled their eyes



when hearing about landlords being sticklers. He gave an example of when landlords require people to pay on time, regardless of what happened, because they have to get theirs. He expressed there's a lot that goes into this and a lot of talk that goes on about Branson's live music shows such as which ones are quality and which ones aren't. He commented, one stood up tonight that represents the community with the utmost professionalism and is one of Branson's absolute best shows. He feels if the City were to hurt it in any kind of way or had an ability to help, it needs to help it because the Hughes Brothers is a world-class production that represents the best of the industry. He asked the Board to take this into consideration as well as the Track Family Fun Park and all of the businesses that are there. He added, because messaging is very important as was heard tonight and we want to put our best foot forward. He reiterated, if anything can be done to help the Hughes Brothers Show specifically, which is my personal favorite, he thinks it's very important. He commented, he's talking about the shows that need to represent Branson. Discussion.

Parker Olson, 221 Westminster Place, Hollister, Missouri, commented he thinks people should definitely in this time thank the entertainment industry in this town as they are what has made Branson known. Every time he watches the news or a TV show and hears talk about Branson, he knows they're talking about Branson because it has a lot of opportunities many other small towns don't have. Mr. Olson explained Branson has world class, high-end entertainment options and he thinks the City should do what it can to preserve them and not risk losing or damaging any of them as they're assets to this town.

Cindy Thomas, 3415 West 76 Country Boulevard, Branson, Missouri, introduced herself as a representative from the Mickey Gilley Grand Shanghai Theatre. She echoed the comments of Mr. Wescott and all of the other tenants and reported people who have not had long relationships with her business have given it a break during this time. She understands the City's needs and she's very proud to have it as landlord. She mentioned her business just put up a huge LED wall and was given a discount and she expressed her desire for help from her business' long-going relationships.

Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Mayor Akers called for a vote on the resolution. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Resolution No. 2020-R012 was adopted.

#### **BILL NO. 5825**

##### **Approving the modification of the Energy Performance Loan with Central Bank of Branson.**

First Reading of Bill No. 5825, an ordinance approving the modification of the Energy Performance Loan with Central Bank of Branson was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was presented by Finance Director Jamie Rouch. Mayor Akers asked for a motion approving Bill No. 5825. Alderman Skains so moved, seconded by Alderman Simmons. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Alderman Skains moved to read Bill No. 5825 for its final reading due to time sensitivity, seconded by Alderman Whiteis. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Voting aye: Whiteis and Skains. Nays: Simmons, Milton and Seay. Absent: McConnell. Motion failed.

#### **BILL NO. 5826**

##### **Approving the contract with Branson Housing Authority pertaining to the transfer of ownership of property from the Branson Housing Authority to the City of Branson.**

First Reading of Bill No. 5826, an ordinance approving the contract with Branson Housing Authority pertaining to the transfer of ownership of property from the Branson Housing Authority to the City of Branson was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was presented by Finance Director Jamie Rouch. Mayor Akers asked for a motion approving Bill No. 5826. Alderman Skains so



moved, seconded by Alderman Simmons. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter.

Marcia Schemper-Carlock, 113 Winged Foot Drive, Branson, Missouri, introduced herself as the Director of the Taney Hills Library and mentioned reading the language of this contract agreement and didn't see where it's listed as public parking. She pointed out the library is adjacent to this area and also struggles with a parking problem. She explained the library is not funded by the federal government like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but she wishes it was. She mentioned a number of library volunteers park along Pacific Street which is a difficult street. There are no stop signs, traffic is quick, the grade is pretty steep and the library's thrift shop volunteers are elderly. She inquired if this public parking could be used by library volunteers and staff and she expressed the importance and need for it. She welcomed donations of any items not sold during the City's surplus property sale to generate some money since the library was shut down like other places. Discussion.

Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Alderman Milton did not vote.

#### **BILL NO. 5827**

#### **Amending Chapter 2 Section 28 of the Branson Municipal Code pertaining to Administrative/supervisory committees.**

First Reading of Bill No. 5827, an ordinance amending Chapter 2 Section 28 of the Branson Municipal Code pertaining to Administrative/supervisory committees was read by title by City Clerk Lisa Westfall and a staff report was presented by City Attorney Chris Lebeck. Mayor Akers asked for a motion approving Bill No. 5827. Alderman Skains so moved, seconded by Alderman Simmons. Mayor Akers asked for anyone in the audience wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. Discussion. Alderman Skains moved to amend Bill No. 5827, Section 2-28(a) by striking "Shall serve on one of the following committees", seconded by Alderman Seay. Mayor Akers asked for anyone wishing to speak regarding this matter. Hearing none, Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. No discussion. Mayor Akers called for a vote on the amendment. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Mayor Akers called for a vote on Bill No. 5827 as amended. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Akers stated this appointment process is in accordance with the Board and Committee Appointments Procedure. Mayor Akers announced the following appointments for Category 4:

#### **Category 4:**

#### **Budget and Finance Committee:**

Larry Milton, Appointment to the Budget and Finance Committee with a term expiring April 2021.

Bob Simmons, Appointment to the Budget and Finance Committee with a term expiring April 2021.

#### **Capital Improvement Committee:**

Kevin McConnell, Appointment to the Capital Improvement Committee with a term expiring April 2021.

Bill Skains, Appointment as an Alternate to the Capital Improvement Committee with a term expiring April 2021.



**Human Resources Committee:**

Bill Skains, Appointment to the Human Resources Committee with a term expiring April 2021.

Jeff Seay, Appointment to the Human Resources Committee with a term expiring April 2021.

**Chamber of Commerce Representative:**

Jamie Whiteis, Appointment as the Chamber of Commerce Representative for the City with a term expiring April 2021.

**Taney County Economic Development Partnership Board:**

Bob Simmons, Appointment to the Taney County Partnership Board with a term expiring April 2021.

**Branson Housing Authority Board:**

Brian Clonts, Appointment to the Branson Housing Authority to fill the unexpired term of Joyce Thompson until October 2021.

Mayor Akers asked if any Aldermen would like for an appointment to be pulled off the slate to be voted on individually. Hearing none, Mayor Akers requested the following appointments be made for Category 5:

**Category 5:**

**Advisory Park Board (Alderman Rep):**

Jamie Whiteis, Appointment to the Advisory Park Board with a term expiring April 2021.

**Planning Commission (Alderman Rep):**

Jeff Seay, Appointment to the Planning Commission with a term expiring April 2021.

**M. Graham Clark Downtown Airport Board:**

Larry Milton, Appointment to the M. Graham Clark Downtown Airport Board with a term expiring April 2021.

**Branson Hills Infrastructure Facilities CID:**

Pat Joyce, Appointment to the Branson Hills Infrastructure Facilities CID with a term expiring June 2024.

Robert Davis, Appointment to the Branson Hills Infrastructure Facilities CID with a term expiring June 2024.

Jerry Givens, Appointment to the Branson Hills Infrastructure Facilities CID with a term expiring June 2024.

Mayor Akers asked for a motion to approve the appointments as listed for Category 5. Alderman Skains so moved, seconded by Alderman Milton. Mayor Akers asked for comments from the Board. No discussion. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried.



## MAYOR/ALDERMEN/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS

Alderman Simmons said while listening to the news over the last few days, he feels something should be done to support the Police Department as there doesn't seem to be too many people behind the Police Departments across the country. He thinks the City has a great deal of confidence in its Police Department and they are transparent, but was just thinking what could be done. Alderman Simmons commented, when he heard the many speakers tonight he feels there may be an even bigger problem as the Police are now being asked to deal with demonstrations that are possibly not going to be peaceable. They're possibly going to block roads, invite confrontation and he'd really like the City to think about what can be done with permits for demonstrations, what it should do at that point that can legally be done to help and not put the Police Department in a bad position. He emphasized to do what's legal and feels certainly an orderly demonstration that's not blocking roads or public property is fine, but when there's one that's not and deliberately blocks roads that's not approved, that becomes something else. Alderman Simmons explained he's sure the City's looking at it, but really wants it to look at what kind of position it's putting people in and try to head off what it can with administration and still allow proper expression from the people. He expressed his desire to continue that discussion if this goes on and as things are seen that we're not used to seeing here in the Branson area. He really hates to see the Police Department put in that position. He said it's okay to put the Board in that position, but doesn't think it's okay to put the Police Department there. Alderman Simmons feels they have to have good guidance, planning and a lot of luck going forward to continue operating the way they have and still be able to do what needs to be done to protect the public.

Alderman Skains commented being from the south, knowing the history of the KKK and talking about other issues has been very painful. He mentioned spending his entire life designing employment training programs, teaching people to read and write, helping the economically disadvantaged and educationally disadvantaged for almost 40 years. He said it almost brought him to tears listening to the lady who said she hated people and that she wants to teach her children and grandchildren to hate. He said that's very painful and does not represent this community by any means, in the strongest means, it does not. He agreed with Alderman Milton and said he abhors the Ku Klux Klan, exactly what he said. Alderman Skains feels her statements need to be publicly renounced and condemned exactly the same as that is not the community and is not what Branson stands for. He added, we stand up and salute the flag, we say that we're going to protect all rights and then something like this happens. He said he was reminded that silence is violence and he will not be silent, but he's not going to say it on Facebook because he doesn't think it's the right place. He doesn't wish to be silent, doesn't think the Board needs to be silent and it needs to very strongly say it doesn't like what's happening. Alderman Skains has received many telephone calls from people asking what in the world is going on in Branson. He mentioned growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the former Governor of the State of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, had lived with his parents. Mr. Faubus was part of the Little Rock Central High School crisis, so he got to hear about that. Alderman Skains said he's also sat with Ernest Green, one of the Little Rock Nine, who was a mentor of his growing up. Alderman Skains said it hurts him to hear these things as they have no part in the community and he wishes they would get out of it. He commented he doesn't like this and doesn't think the City should be any part of this.

City Administrator Stan Dobbins stated he's going to say something some people won't be happy to hear, but he's going to say it anyway. He referred to the woman in the viral video and said her behavior was appalling. As a police officer for 40 years, he has arrested members of the Ku Klux Klan and he's not going to tell anyone he's sorry that he did it. City Administrator Dobbins mentioned his son-in-law is black and he comes to this town all the time and never has a problem. So it makes him wonder where all the mouths and voices come from that say the City of Branson is a problem, when they can drive 30 miles down the road and be in Harrison, Arkansas. He explained if people want to find the Ku Klux Klan, go to Harrison, Arkansas. He's proud of this community, proud of the people who live here and is proud of everything they do. He's proud of every one of the members of Branson's Police Department and what they do every day to protect everyone's right to speak. He said he's perturbed and angry about what occurred with George Floyd as he should have never died as it was a tragedy. Having been a police officer for 40 years and trained officers in the police academy in defensive tactics, he reported there's no defensive tactics ever taught that he's aware of that teaches someone to put a knee on a man's neck and hold him there. City Administrator Dobbins commented that's wrong, but we



address the problem; we do not become the problem. Problems are addressed by communicating with one another.

Mayor Akers expressed his appreciation for each of the Aldermen sharing and feels this has been a very difficult time for a lot of people. He voiced his concerns from watching the video of the protests and watching the people who were there as it seemed like there were a lot of people he didn't recognize as Branson people. He doesn't know whether it was staged or if this lady came to town, because he can't find out who she is. He mentioned she gave a name, but it's apparently a fictitious name and he feels it's sad outside influences are coming into the community, causing issues for Branson. He thinks everything goes back to attitude and mentioned Charles Swindoll has said, the longer he lives the more he realizes the impact of attitude on life. He's convinced that life is 10% what happens to him and 90% is how he reacts to it. Mayor Akers stressed the importance of this and reminded everyone the Board serves the people of Branson. It's called to do the best it can to make good decisions, but serves the people first and needs to get their input and discussion. He doesn't think there's a Branson area person who's happy with this situation and the way they're being characterized across social media. He mentioned sharing with everyone earlier that it was put out on social media that he was at the protests, when he was actually at his grandson's baseball game in Springfield. He urged people to be extremely diligent to do their own research and homework to make sure the data they have is correct. He explained his final statement is that people change and there are things in his past he's not proud of, but he's grown beyond them. He feels everyone has the opportunity to be realized and recognized that they can grow beyond their past and become a better person. He stated Branson is bigger than this issue and situation and it will get through it, but it has to be done together with the right attitude. The attitude to make sure Branson is recognized as a place where people are welcome and will be treated well.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

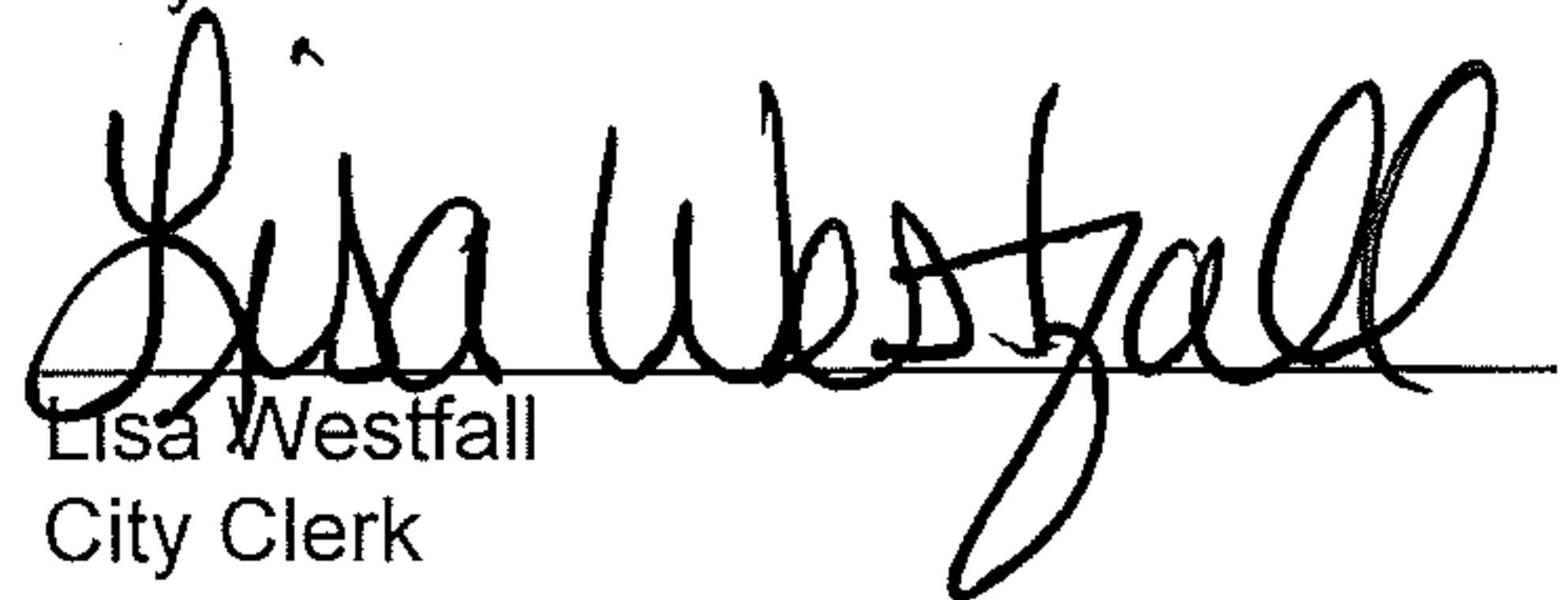
Mayor Akers asked for a motion to go into closed executive session. Alderman Simmons moved to go into closed executive session pursuant to 610.021.1 RSMo for litigation, seconded by Alderman Skains. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried.

## ADJOURN

Mayor Akers asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Seay moved to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Milton. Voting aye: Whiteis, Simmons, Skains, Milton and Seay. Nays: none. Absent: McConnell. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.



E. Edd Akers  
Mayor



Lisa Westfall  
City Clerk



Parker Olson - Speaker Public Comment 6/23/20

HELLO, MY NAME IS PARKER OLSON AND I AM WANTING TO SHARE THIS DOCUMENT WITH YOU CONTAINING SOME STATISTICS IN FAVOR OF PLANNING FOR BRANSON'S FINANCIAL FUTURE.

PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 - 34 TYPICALLY SPEND MORE ON VACATIONS, WITH 33% WILLING TO SPEND OVER \$5,000 ON A VACATION.

MILLENNIALS TYPICALLY TRAVEL AN AVERAGE OF 34 DAYS A YEAR AND GEN Z TRAVELS AN AVERAGE OF 29 DAYS A YEAR.

WHILE OUR YOUNGER GENERATION TRAVELS MORE ONLY 2% ARE WILLING TO SPEND MORE TO STAY AT A 5-STAR HOTEL WHILE MOST OPT TO STAY AT AIR-BNB'S AND HOSTELS, WITH MANY PREFERRING TO RENT HOMES.

90 PERCENT OF MILLENNIALS WHO HAVE GONE ON A CRUISE ENJOYED IT WITH OVER TWO-THIRDS STATING THAT THEY STRONGLY ENJOYED IT. RECENTLY LAKE AND RIVER CRUISES HAVE ALSO BEEN ON THE RISE WITH THE YOUNGER GENERATION ENJOYING SMALLER CROWDS.

THE TOP 3 REASONS MILLENNIALS STATED THEY ENJOYED TRAVEL WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1: RELAX (64%)
- 2: SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH FAMILY (59%)
- 3: SEE NATURAL SIGHTS (38%)

ON AVERAGE MILLENNIALS TOOK 2.38 VACATIONS A YEAR WITH GEN X TAKING 1.8 AND 51+ TAKING 1.65.